

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER
SEPTEMBER 17, 2019**

ITEM 6

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE DRINKING WATER SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR POLICY HANDBOOK

DISCUSSION

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) has developed a draft Administrator Policy Handbook (Policy Handbook) pursuant to Assembly Bill 2501 (AB 2501), as codified in Health and Safety Code section 116686. AB 2501 requires the State Water Board to develop standards, terms, and procedures in a handbook for Administrators consistent with statutory requirements. The State Water Board presented the draft Policy Handbook at a board workshop held on August 21, 2019. The State Water Board received public comments both at the workshop and during the public comment period. Based on these comments, staff made some revisions to the draft that are reflected in the Policy Handbook that is being considered for adoption.

This Policy Handbook is the first version of a new programmatic approach, and as such, future revisions are anticipated in relatively short order as lessons are learned from the initial experiences.

Generally, the appointment of an Administrator will be considered by the State Water Board when it is necessary to provide an adequate supply of affordable, safe drinking water to disadvantaged communities and to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. Administrators may be assigned broad duties, such as overseeing all activities of a water system and acting as its general manager, or very specific duties, such as managing an infrastructure improvement project on behalf of the water system.

This Policy Handbook has been developed for the State Water Board's implementation of AB 2501 and will be an important part of the implementation of the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, which was recently established through the enactment of Senate Bill 200 (SB 200). AB 2501 made certain modifications to the State Water Board's administrator authority, and required the development and adoption of a policy handbook to implement processes and procedures for the selection of an administrator, challenges to the administrator selected and decisions made by the administrator, public participation in the discharge of the administrator's duties, costs to be borne by the State Water Board and the respective water system (or systems), and transparency with respect to the affected water system.

In this first iteration of the Policy Handbook, the intent was to strike an appropriate balance between local and public involvement and maintaining the ability of the State Water Board to move nimbly to respond to situations that may require the services of an administrator to ensure safe and affordable drinking water.

The Policy Handbook is foundational to the implementation of AB 2501. AB 2501 is designed to address climate change issues and public health concerns related to unsafe drinking water conditions which persist in many communities of the state. AB 2501 is critical to implementing the Human Right to Water policy.

POLICY ISSUE

The development and adoption of this Policy Handbook is foundational to the implementation of the Safe, Affordable Drinking Water program. This program is essential to meet the highest priorities of the State Water Board, the legislature, and the Governor.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

To adopt the Administrator Policy Handbook via the attached Resolution.